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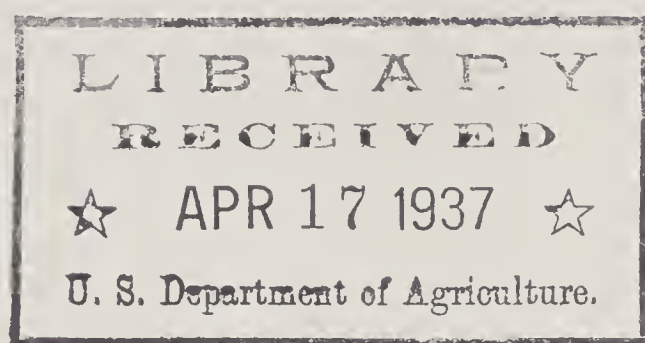
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EXCEPTIONAL NATIVE PLANTS

For Wildflower Garden
and Woodland



Robert S. Lemmon

Ponus Ridge

New Canaan, Conn.

By Way of Foreword

SEVERAL motives lie behind the presentation of this short list of hardy native American plants.

First, to make available superior nursery-produced specimens as distinguished from the more or less unsatisfactory "collected" stock, thereby enhancing your pleasure and success in establishing them in garden or woodland and at the same time making a definite contribution to true conservation. Secondly, to call attention to certain exceptionally lovely species, two of which have hitherto been considered all but impossible to grow successfully. And thirdly, to provide adequate cultural details based on exhaustive first-hand tests. The whole project has the full approval of the Wild Flower Preservation Society and numerous other organizations and individuals interested in perpetuating our too-often vanishing native plants.

The plants described are all propagated in my own nursery and grown on under controlled conditions which promote maximum quality without in the least impairing their natural hardiness. Their perfect root systems and general development make them definitely superior to specimens collected from the wild, and much easier to transplant. All are grown and shipped in 3½" peatmoss pots which you leave intact, with all protruding roots, when planting. The successful establishment of each species is guaranteed when the specified conditions and cultural details are followed. Failure to carry through these directions, on the other hand, will often lead to failure.

In all cases the prices quoted include packing and delivery to points in the United States. For shipments to Canada, please add 10% to defray the much higher shipping expense.

During the present season I expect to have ready adequate stocks of several other particularly desirable native species which at the time of writing are not sufficiently developed to be offered. Correspondence about these, or concerning still other species with whose propagation and culture I am still experimenting, will always be welcomed.

ROBERT S. LEMMON

New Canaan, Conn.
February, 1937

Trailing Arbutus (*Epigaea repens*)

THIS delightful prostrate evergreen, native to Canada, New England, parts of the West and southward as far as Florida, has long baffled attempts to establish it in woodland and wildflower gardens where it was not naturally found. Ninety-nine out of every hundred efforts to transplant it from the wild have failed, however carefully executed.

But pot-grown plants raised from specially bred seed under perfectly controlled conditions of soil, light and moisture have opened a new avenue of salvation for this best loved of our vanishing wildflowers. Such plants are perfectly hardy and can be set out successfully, to grow in beauty and unique spring-time charm as the years go by. They are sources of increasing pleasure not only as rarities of strong appeal, but also because each one represents an actual increase in the sorely depleted ranks of their race—a tangible forward step in conservation.

Trailing Arbutus requires an intensely acid, well drained soil, practically full shade in summer, and a fair supply of water at all times. In regions of prolonged summer heat it does best on a northward facing slope. Lime in any form it refuses to tolerate. It likes the sort of soil in which grow other acid-lovers like our native Azaleas, Pink Ladyslipper, Twinflower, Dwarf Blueberry, Galax, Painted Trillium, Bunchberry, Rhododendrons and Mountain Laurel. Even where such species are growing, however, it is strongly advisable to make up a special soil bed which will promote the Arbutus' best development. Such a bed is prepared thus:

Select a location in light to full shade, and preferably on a slope for the sake of assured drainage. Do not choose a place directly under large, thick evergreens, where it would become too dry in summer.

For each plant, dig out and discard the soil from a space eight or ten inches deep and a foot across. Fill this hole with a thorough mixture of four parts well rotted Oak leafmold, two parts coarse sand and two parts crumbled peatmoss or sedge peat. Quite as good as the Oak mold which you may collect from the woods is Maplevale Leafmold, sold in bags by the Maplevale Leafmold Co., East Kingston, New Hampshire. Leafmold from Maples and most other shade trees is not sufficiently acid and should not be used. *Be sure and follow this prescription closely.*

Because Trailing Arbutus sharply resents

disturbance of its underground parts, every plant is grown and shipped in an individual peatmoss pot. In planting, do not remove this pot; merely set it, plant and all, to its full depth in the center of the prepared bed, fill in around it closely but not so tight as to press the pot out of shape, firm down pot, plant and surrounding soil firmly, water thoroughly and cover the whole prepared area with a light mulch (barely enough to conceal the ground) of dead Oak leaves or fallen Pine, Hemlock or Spruce needles, which is allowed to remain permanently and will provide acidity. The pot will not hinder the normal expansion of the root system and will gradually disintegrate. If the nearby soil is alkaline, give the Arbutus area a very light sprinkling of aluminum sulphate every spring.

It is highly important that Trailing Arbutus be not allowed to suffer from dryness during the first full year in its new location, and that it never be shifted from one place to another. A thorough weekly wetting, either by rain or artificially, should be provided during the first year until the ground freezes. In this connection, remember that the ordinary summer shower does little real good, especially under trees. If the water you intend using is alkaline or "hard," add a pinch of aluminum sulphate to each pailful, to neutralize it. No winter protection save a few fallen tree leaves will be needed.

Four-year flowering age plants, 6"-8" spread: \$1.50 each, 6 for \$7.50, \$15 a dozen, 50 for \$57.

Three-year plants, 4"-6": \$1 each, 6 for \$5, \$10 a dozen, 50 for \$37.

Special prices on larger quantities. Shipping season, early April through October.

Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)

FROM Long Island northward along the sea-coast to Nova Scotia, thence west in a great circle that carries it around the globe, is the principal habitat of this splendidly hardy, trailing shrublet which, beyond question, is our finest evergreen ground cover for well drained situations. Small pinkish white blossoms in spring, a flare of scarlet autumn berries, and countless little olive green, oblong leaves that change to bronzy red for the winter months—these are its color scheme. Add to them the exceptional grace of the long streamers which are its outposts as it spreads farther each year, and the density and neatness of the plant's central portion, and you have a picture not easily forgotten.

Like Trailing Arbutus, Bearberry is ex-

tremely difficult to transplant from the wild. My pot-grown plants from seed, however, move readily while still fairly small, and though the seed takes two years to germinate, the plants grow readily once they get under way. The woody stems root as they grow, and eventually an old plant will cover an area several yards in extent unless it is cut back. Consequently Bearberry is exceptionally good for forming an evergreen blanket, not over six inches thick, on sloping banks, terraces and other fairly large spaces. It does best in full sun, but will be entirely satisfactory in partial shade.

The soil for Bearberry should be a light, sandy, somewhat acid loam, very well drained. No winter protection or special fertilizing is necessary, but it is advisable to keep the plants reasonably well watered during their first season. My plants are all grown and shipped in peatmoss pots, which must not be removed when setting out. Plant them exactly as received, without disturbing roots or adhering soil.

Plants about 9" spread: \$1 each, 6 for \$5. Shipping season, early April through October. Limited supply.

Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*)

TINIEST of our Dogwoods, a dense-spreading ground cover no more than six inches or so in height, Bunchberry is one of the North Woods' choicest flower offerings. In May and June its ribbed green mat is starred with true little white Dogwood blossoms which, by late August, have yielded to the clustered scarlet fruits which give the plant its name. Through its natural range, from the New England States westward to the Pacific, you sometimes find it growing in solid sheets many yards in extent.

Although a true Dogwood, Bunchberry is herbaceous, losing most of its leaves and stems in late fall. New growth starts quite early in the spring, rising not only from last year's crown, but also from the underground shoots which, setting forth in all directions, are the main sources of increase. It is a lover of deep, cool, strongly acid woods humus and half to full shade—the same conditions that please the Painted Trillium and Twinflower. The soil mixture prescribed for Trailing Arbutus is right for all these.

In preparing for a planting of Bunchberry, provide the correct soil mixture over the whole area you want the plants eventually to cover, for remember that they root as they

grow. Let the bed be six to eight inches or more deep, to insure coolness and moisture retention. When planting, do not remove the soil and peatmoss adhering to the roots.

Strong two-year plants from seed: 50 cents each, 6 for \$2.50, \$5 a dozen. Shipping season, early April through October.

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)

TO those who know the streamsides and the margins of lakes and marshlands from New Brunswick to the Pacific Coast, and southward through the eastern section of the country as far as Florida, the glowing flame of the Cardinal Flower's blossoms in late summer is an unforgettable memory. Of all our native plants, this is the most arresting red, a strikingly intense and luminous scarlet-cardinal.

Cardinal Flower is a perennial which, under favorable conditions, reaches a height of four feet or more. Its vivid, somewhat loosely formed blossoms are borne in long spires at the tops of erect stalks which, in a well developed plant, may number a half-dozen or more. When happily situated the clumps increase in size by offsets from the crown, and in addition to this a certain amount of self-sowing may be expected. Altogether it is a plant of outstanding merit, especially where a fairly tall, almost startlingly effective color accent in late summer is desired.

It should not be assumed that Cardinal Flower requires a wet location. On the contrary, it is likely to grow better and be longer-lived in a place which is no more than average in moisture. The ordinary border, if not noticeably dry, suits it quite well. It should be provided, however, with a rather heavy soil, even verging on "muck," and without an appreciable amount of lime. The ideal chemical condition is slightly acid, though either neutral or strongly acid is all right. For exposure, anything from full shade to three-quarters sun.

Strong year-old plants from seed: 50 cents each, 6 for \$2.50, \$5 a dozen. Shipping seasons, early April to mid-May, and mid-September through October.

Creeping Bluet (*Houstonia serpyllifolia*)

HERE is the southern mountain cousin of the beloved Quaker Ladies of our New England meadows (*H. coerulea*)—and a cousin very well worth knowing, indeed.

Imagine, if you will, a compact little pincushion of light green, completely covered in May with the daintest of upward-facing blue blossoms with yellow eyes. When young, it is perhaps four inches in diameter, but the innumerable tiny stems reach out and out, rooting as they go, so that in two or three years the pincushion becomes a mat, and the mat a blanket, and the beauty of it in the warm spring sunshine is not to be told in words. Even in midwinter, if the ground happens to be bare, you will find it good to look upon, for the Creeping Bluet is an evergreen and, for all its southern origin, perfectly cheerful in sub-zero weather.

Half-sun, perfect drainage, and the same sort of acid soil mixture that I advise for Trailing Arbutus are the requirements of Creeping Bluets. Here in Connecticut they do best when shaded in summer from noon until three or four o'clock. Too much shade, on the other hand, tends to make them a bit straggly and lessen the density of form which is one of their distinctive charms. They naturally suggest themselves as ground covers along the edges of Rhododendron or Laurel plantings, for carpeting in the rock garden, and many other situations where a dainty, low (3"-6") flowering evergreen is desired.

Strong young plants with 4" spread: 50 cents each, 6 for \$2.50, \$5 a dozen. Shipping season, early April through October.

Gay-wings (*Polygala paucifolia*)

IF there is a more surprising, colorful and wholly appealing small flower elf than this shy woodland dweller, I have yet to see it. "Gay-wings" is an apt description of its purple-pink, inch-long blossoms with their two flaring petals and tiny fringe tuft at the end of the long, oddly shaped keel. A patch of it in blossom in May inevitably suggests a flock of little pink butterflies poised upon the stem tips three or four inches above the ground. Always, too, it calls to mind the Orchid tribe (to which it is wholly unrelated), because of its peculiar blossom form and color.

Though Gay-wings is native to a large territory from New Brunswick west to Minnesota and southward along the Alleghanies to Georgia, comparatively few people know it. It is found in a variety of shaded, woody locations ranging from damp to decidedly dry, its chief soil requirement seeming to be plenty of leaf-mold and acidity. In planting, give it the same sort of soil that Arbutus demands.

Gay-wings is a somewhat scattering mat-former, spreading in an intricate network of underground rooting stems from which the leaf and flower shoots rise at intervals. Its broadly oval, olive-green foliage is never so thick as to crowd other dainty companions like Hepaticas, Windflowers and Linnaea. It is especially effective when interplanted with such as these, or used as an underplanting in the shade of native Azaleas, Ferns or any of the broad-leaved evergreens.

You have to be a bit patient with Gay-wings, for it is not a rapid grower and deliberates considerably before deciding to flower for the first time. Even nursery-propagated plants like mine may take a year or two to become fully established, but from then on they blossom as regularly as the seasons come.

Two-year plants: 50 cents each, 6 for \$2.50, \$5 a dozen. Shipping season, early April through October.

Twinflower (*Linnaea borealis americana*)

SLENDER woody stems that thread along the forest floor as lightly as shadows; we rounded leaves spaced at just the right intervals and holding their cheerful green the winter through; in early summer, pairs of dainty, pinkish, inverted blossoms at the tips of short, erect, fragile stalks, so fragrant that one wonders how anything so airy can hold so much of perfume—such is the Twinflower.

The natural range of the Twinflower is from upper New England west to the Pacific, and irregularly southward along the Alleghenies as far as Virginia. It adapts itself readily, however, to almost any well drained, fully shaded location over a far larger territory, provided it is given a fine, acid, leaf-moldy soil such as is required for Trailing Arbutus and Bunchberry. Granted these conditions, nursery-grown plants will gradually extend their growth above-ground and below, forming not so much a mat as a delicately patterned evergreen tracery no more than an inch or two high, with the flower stems a couple of inches taller.

The other natives with which Twinflower can be used appropriately are legion. Painted Trilliums are excellent companions for it, as also are Anemones, Gay-wings and any of the shade-loving shrubs that like acid soil. Needless to say, a naturalistic setting shows this dainty little trailer at its best, for it is essentially a plant of the woodlands.

Strong-rooted plants, 6"-8" spread: 50 cents each, 6 for \$2.50, \$5 a dozen. Shipping season, early April through October.